[fic] Branding.

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Title: Branding.
Fandom: Supernatural.
Rating: NC-17.
Warnings: Dub-con.
Pairings/Characters: Michael/Crowley.
Word Count: 1,815~ words.
Summary: Crowley makes the mistake of finding out why an archangel is on Earth in 1978, and a deal is made.

Note: **mithrel** reminded me that I said I'd write a ficlet with this pairing, so many thanks to her. She also let me complain about how I was trying to make this a PWP ficlet and some plot snuck in regardless, so many thanks for that. :)

Set during 5x13, this contains a somewhat darker take on Michael than my usual idea for him, but I did my darndest to keep them in character. Feedback would be appreciated.

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There's no reason for him to be here, not when he can feel the bright beacon of energy that screams 'archangel' to the world. There's absolutely less reason for him to be investigating it on his own.

But sometimes Crowley's instinct for survival fails him and a burning curiosity takes over, and usually he can rely on this curiosity. It's led him to things that wound up bringing in profit, be it a weird artifact or a secret that's worth a lot to the right people or more.

Crowley suspects that certain people, influential people, would give a lot to know why an archangel is walking the earth. So here he is, in Kansas of all places, approaching certain death to see why it's walking.

He arrives barely seconds after he feels the queasy shift of power that indicates when something's bending time. He stays out of sight, overly aware that the archangel knows that he's there. That is, he stays out of sight until he hears a quiet voice say "Come on out, demon."

Crowley comes out, hands up. "I'm harmless," he says. "Just here to find out why your kind is walking, that's all." He tries a smile, a nice innocent grin that

hopefully conveys that he's not stupid enough to be plotting anything.

"My business is concluded here, demon. My kind won't be back for more than several decades." He (Crowley needs to get a name, honestly) raises a hand, then pauses. "I may have a use for you."

Crowley's never going to listen to his little suicidal curiosity again. Sure, knowing when the Apocalypse is likely to hit is good to know, but he doesn't want to be useful to an archangel. Especially since he has a feeling that this one wouldn't let him cash in any favor Crowley gains from this.

"What's in it for me?" He has to ask, though. "I mean, I'd be happy to do something for you, but business is business, yeah?"

For a moment he's afraid that he'll be smote, or banished, but then the angel tilts his head and that's one of the most devious smirks Crowley's ever seen on any being.

"I'll tell you about a weapon that could destroy angels, and perhaps even Lucifer, if you do this work for me."

Oh, and isn't *that* interesting? Crowley has to stop, stop and really make sure it's an angel he's talking to. "Who are you?" He needs a name. Which angel would give a demon such a weapon? Which archangel?

The archangel's smirk widens. "Michael."

Oh, hell. Crowley silently promises himself to never ever again satisfy his curiosity, especially if it involves angels.

"Why would you offer that?" He has to ask, though. It's just too good to be true. "What kind of price do I have to pay?" Because he's going to pay it, he can't pass up such an offer, as he truly doubts that Michael would lie. Even if Crowley is a demon. Angels have some form of honor, he's sure of that much.

"You're going to spend the next decade subtly directing demonic activity away from attacking two children, Crowley." Of course Michael knows who he is, and Crowley wouldn't be surprised if he knew what rank he was as well, and more. Michael shifts his stance, and moves closer. "I'm not expecting bodyguards. I'm expecting you to make more than a passing attempt to keep them alive until they're old enough to defend themselves."

Crowley thinks of the favors he'll need to pull, and the management skills he's going to need to employ to set this up. "And in exchange for these two kids making it to puberty, I get access to a weapon that can kill angels."

"Yes. Is it a deal?" Michael's still smirking.

Crowley licks his lips. There's only one answer he can possibly give. "Yes."

Michael moves closer, and by the time Crowley realizes that Michael intends to seal the deal the way he does, it's too late. Michael's kissing him, hard and with a kind of intensity that Crowley hasn't been on the receiving end of in centuries. Barely a blink later, when he can feel the contract settling on him, he realizes that he's developing an interest in the kiss.

A physical interest. And Michael's close enough to feel Crowley stir against him, and oh, but Crowley's never felt an archangel laugh before. Michael pulls back fractionally, and there's an amusement in his eyes that gives Crowley the shivers.

(He once saw Lucifer, on one of the rare occasions when Lucifer's cage was transparent enough for the demons to see their creator. He was there, he had to be there. He paid his tribute and he made the mistake of meeting Lucifer's eyes. Lucifer looked back at him, and Crowley had fought not to cower under that gaze, as he saw the naked hatred Lucifer bore for him and his race, and a dark amusement when he realized that Lucifer knew he was scared.

Crowley knew then that he would do anything to stay away from that creature, to survive what it wanted to do to all demons. The day he had returned to Earth after that, he'd immediately started a covert search for any weapons or defenses against angels, archangels, and Lucifer.)

Michael has that same amusement. Crowley had heard that they were brothers, that they were related. This confirmed it for him.

"Do you enjoy the danger, Crowley?" Michael asks, lips barely inches away from Crowley's. "I could burn you out as easily as breathing, you know."

"I know," Crowley says. He's scared. He's scared witless, and later he knows that he'll excuse the fear, because he's face to face with one of the most powerful creatures in all of creation. "I don't enjoy danger." That is said in a whisper, without conviction, because Crowley came *here* on his own.

"I don't like liars," Michael whispers back, placing a hand on Crowley's chest. "Don't lie to me again, or I'll make this permanent."

Crowley doesn't get a chance to ask what 'this' is before there is an explosion of heat from Michael's hand. Crowley howls at the pain, at the fire burning through his skin, and his body tries to throw itself back, away from Michael, but he's stuck, held by the power. He can't even attempt to stop possessing his vessel, and the fire is affecting his true self as well.
It is a full minute before the heat dies away and Michael lets him collapse on the floor.

It is another minute before Crowley can get up, can look at himself and try to figure out how badly he's burnt.

His clothes are fine, when he checks. They're cleaner than they were when Crowley arrived. Michael even reaches out to flick off a bit of ash from Crowley's suit jacket.

"It's a brand, Crowley," Michael says, and the bastard is smiling. "The mark of a liar. Lie while you're wearing it and it will burn."

Crowley looks down his shirt, and sees a bright red hand-print on his chest. He has a feeling that if he vacated his vessel it would be on his true form as well.

"That will fade in a week, Crowley," Michael goes on. "But lie to me again, at any time, in any way, and I will put it back, and I will make it permanent."

"I...I understand." Crowley says. He doesn't say that Michael reminds him of Lucifer, or that he needs to lie to work properly.

"Now, where were we..." Michael moves in close again and kisses Crowley, hard and intense again, and okay, Crowley enjoys danger. He's aroused again, like it or not, and when Michael bites down on Crowley's lips he draws a moan out of Crowley.

He gets a look at Michael's eyes, and he knows that this isn't going to end any time soon: Michael is *interested* in him now, and Crowley can only wait the interest out.

"I like that," Michael tells him, and then Crowley is shoved back up against the nearest wall so Michael can work his pants open, so Michael can expose Crowley and then *touch*.

Michael's eyes stay on him, even when he frees Crowley's cock and squeezes it too tightly when he first takes a hold of Crowley. Michael's attention is on how Crowley cries out at the touches, and on how he can see Crowley struggling not to lose too much of his composure, even when Michael kisses him again.

Crowley can't help but grab onto Michael's shoulders and hang on for dear life as Michael strokes and then pinches him, drawing out moans and yelps and short gasps. He doesn't know exactly when he went from making a deal with the angel to getting a handjob from the angel, but he's not in control.

"Reciprocate," Michael orders, and Crowley has no choice but to fumble with Michael's pants while he's being ruthlessly driven to the edge. Michael stops stroking when Crowley first touches him, and lets Crowley figure out how best to touch and drag his fingers along Michael's cock, and Crowley can't help but feel a bit of terrified pride when he makes Michael jolt and moan. (Two fingers on the head, use a touch of fingernails.)

Then Michael resumes his stroking, and this time when he kisses Crowley his nerves light up with a bright flare of heat that doesn't hurt. Crowley feels like he's on fire, a bright fire that makes him twitch and jerk in Michael's hands and when he finally can't handle it, when he has to beg -

"Please, finish it, g-" Michael shuts him up with a kiss before he completes the blasphemy and twists his hand in a way that pushes Crowley over the edge with

a shout, coming over Michael's hand. His own hands clench involuntarily, and Crowley sees the moment Michael comes, dazed as he is, for Michael's eyes are surprised, his mouth open to cry out as he finds release.

The fire in his nerves vanishes abruptly, and he comes down from his release to find that he's cold.

Michael has backed away, and they are both clean again when Michael realizes that he's stained with come from both of them. Crowley doesn't thank him for the service, and instead closes his pants, discovering that his hands are shaking. He's beginning to shiver all over, and he feels a cold that's already sinking down to his bones, and he realizes that he won't be able to find an equivalent heat to warm him up again with any earthly means.

"Michael," He says, and he has no idea what he's going to even ask. He doesn't get a chance to figure it out.

"You'll receive your payment in fifteen years, Crowley," Michael says, and then he is gone.